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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001697

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG, IO  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/22/2018  
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: MFA U/S MUTRIFF SIDDIQ WELCOMES US-LED CEASEFIRE  
MONITORING MECHANISM PROPOSAL

REF: A. SECSTATE 122270  
[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 1691

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a November 23 meeting with CDA Fernandez, MFA Undersecretary Mutriff Siddiq welcomed a USG offer to lead efforts to form an interim cease-fire monitoring mechanism for Darfur until UNAMID is prepared to take on the task, but cautioned that the GOS would need time to study both the technical and political aspects of any proposal. Siddiq emphasized that the unconditional cease-fire declared by President Bashir on November 12 was contingent upon a monitoring mechanism, and noted that the rebel movements will continue to undermine it until such a mechanism is in place. He also stated the recent fighting in North Darfur had revolved around the securing of roads and humanitarian convoys, rather than assaults on rebel positions or civilian areas. Siddiq also promised to look into CDA Fernandez' concerns about harassment of International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Darfur, as well as look into several pending visa applications from USG civil and military officials. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Siddiq agreed with CDA Fernandez that it was essential for any cease-fire declared in Darfur to be fully implemented, maintained and effectively monitored, both to stabilize the situation on the ground and to prepare the stage for eventual peace talks in Doha. Listening to CDA Fernandez' description of an interim monitoring team supported by a U.S. contracting firm and staffed with former military officers from Western countries (Reftel), Siddiq noted the similarity of this proposed arrangement to US-supported cease-fire monitoring teams both in the Nuba Mountains and the South (the former Civilian Protection and Monitoring Team). Siddiq had a highly favorable view of these past efforts, which he described as "very professional, very effective and very smooth," adding that the teams earned the respect of the warring parties. "If we can replicate those efforts, it will be very helpful," he said. However, he cautioned that time was needed for the GOS to study both the technical and political aspects of any proposal. "Don't expect a very quick response," he said. He also asked that the same presentation be made to NISS DG Salah Ghosh (septel).

[1](#)3. (C) Siddiq stated that since President Bashir's announcement of the cease-fire on November 12, the rebel movements have looked to provoke confrontation with the SAF, noting in particular a recent incident in Tine in which rebels from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) killed two SAF officers after approaching them peacefully. Another

rebel attack, in Gereida, in South Darfur, may have been caused by ill-disciplined SLM-MM forces (UNAMID confirmed the bare bones of both incidents to emboffs last week). Rebels in North Darfur continue to obstruct humanitarian convoys, he said, and this blocking of roads and convoys has been the impetus for much of the recent fighting in North Darfur (Ref B). He denied that the GOS was attacking rebel positions or civilian targets, stating that it was merely securing transport routes as well as defending itself from rebel provocations. "A cease-fire is not an action where you stay silent and let others take advantage of you," he said.

14. (C) CDA Fernandez also informed Siddiq that the USG remains very concerned over the continued harassment of workers from the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Darfur by authorities of the HAC. He emphasized in particular the withholding of residency permits from senior staff constitutes a "disguised expulsion" of the NGO. Responding to these concerns, Siddiq acknowledged that the IRC was facing difficulties but sought to divert blame to HAC's local commissioners. "We had no hand in selecting them, and we have no influence on them," he said, adding that actions taken against IRC were "not related to policy, but rather to individual personalities." He reassured CDA Fernandez that if the difficulties faced by IRC were related to GOS policy, "we'll make sure to work things out." He also promised to look into the status of the visas of several USG delegations to Sudan, including a Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff delegation, and a status update on the visas for US military observers destined for UNAMID.

15. (C) Comment: Siddiq's positive reaction to a potential

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USG-led Darfur monitoring team is welcome but likely does not represent the views of all members of the regime. If and when a formal proposal is put forth, the GOS might well find it impossible to reject it outright, given their public commitment to a cease-fire and accompanying monitoring mechanism. However, given the politically-charged nature of a USG-led monitoring team, it remains to be seen whether the GOS would facilitate the conditions necessary for it to operate effectively, or whether it would allow bureaucratic impediments to hinder the team's operation and therefore kill the initiative "by a thousand cuts" as is the regime's SOP when it can't afford to say no but doesn't want something to happen. And the regime's position is only one part of the puzzle, as both UNAMID and rebel movements may have their own selfish reasons for obstructing such a worthy initiative. End comment.  
FERNANDEZ